

Message

From: Cisar, Elizabeth [Cisar.Elizabeth@epa.gov]
Sent: 9/21/2021 3:46:22 PM
To: Fox, Radhika [Fox.Radhika@epa.gov]
Subject: Summary of Actions in response to BH Petitioners

An update of actions in case it is helpful:

- Working to facilitate community engagement in EGLE's filter distribution plan?
 - Daily call with EGLE's EJ Public Advocate (Regina Strong) to check on progress and assure that community engagement is happening
 - Along w/ informal engagement, EGLE is meeting with the Benton Harbor Water Outreach Task Force (which includes a representative each from the City of Benton Harbor, the Benton Harbor Community Water Council, Berrien County Health Department, Andrews University, Freshwater Future, and the Benton Spirit Community Newspaper) on near-term plans for an initial "blitz" of getting filters distributed to as many homes as possible; with MDHHS providing outreach/education support.
 - We're agreed w/ Regina Strong, EGLE's EJ Public Advocate that an EPA-hosted meeting with community inclusion/engagement to discuss the overall filter distribution plan (i.e., the proactive, effective program that needs to be in place until lead pipes are removed). The timing of this meeting will be informed by Michael Harris' info-gathering to 'ground truth' the situation independent of EGLE. We may need your help in getting this meeting.
- Michael Harris, Enforcement and Compliance Assurance Division Director for Region 5, who is conducting the inspection of Benton Harbor's PWS, is meeting with Reverend Pinkney to discuss the inspection and filter distribution. We have also facilitated provision of the 2018 Benton Harbor Water System Sanitary Survey to petitioner Elin Betanzo. Elin had FOIA'd the survey to better understand the situation at the water system. Elin provided follow up questions to Michael Harris. He will also be visiting BC Health Dept to independently assess the filter distribution program as it stands.
- We have arranged for ORD to initiate a filter study to ensure the effectiveness of the filters. We will also be including interested members of the petitioners in a meeting to discuss the filter study.
- We have compiled public education materials on filters and lead in drinking water from our prior work in Flint, Newark, and East Chicago. Region 5 is compiling these and drafting materials for Benton Harbor. We are able to translate materials if needed. An update from Alan Walts:
 - We know that MDHHS is also providing outreach & education materials
 - Alan asked EGLE (via EJ program) to share whatever materials they have developed so far; and noted that EPA is ready to prepare any outreach/education materials that may be helpful, including Spanish translation.

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